

Marital Satisfaction, Distress Tolerance and Relationship in the Wives of Alcoholics and Non Alcoholics

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ABSTRACT:

The author examined marital satisfaction, distress tolerance and relationship in the wives of alcoholics and non-alcoholics. The groups were formed on the basis of the responses to the self-report- inventory of alcoholism screening test (CAGE). The purpose was to assess the relation between marital satisfaction, and distress tolerance, as well as relationship and to compare the wives of alcoholic group with the wives of non-alcoholic group. The sample of 100 married women (50 the wives of alcoholics and 50 the wives of non-alcoholics) was taken for this study. Marital satisfaction, Distress tolerance and Relationship interaction scales were used to the wives of alcoholics and non-alcoholics. Percentage, correlation, and 't- test' were done for analysis. Discussion focused on the relation between marital satisfaction and distress tolerance as well as relationship and the comparison of the two groups of the wives of alcoholics and non-alcoholics. The findings are that the wives of alcoholic and non-alcoholic spouses differed significantly in marital satisfaction and relationship but not in distress tolerance.

Keywords: Marital satisfaction, distress tolerance and relationship, wives of alcoholics and non-alcoholics

INTRODUCTION

A family is established through the institution of marriage which involves emotional and legal commitment in any adult life. A good marriage produces a satisfied life and also generates a sense of well-being. Marital quality measures have been the most frequently researched variables in the marriage and family field [1]. Marital satisfaction by a marriage is the ability of partner to adjust to a variety of changes and to cope with various stressors. It is a commitment of strong family relationships with love and responsibility for peace, happiness and development [2].

Distress tolerance is the capacity to experience and withstand negative psychological states. Distress may be the result of cognitive or physical processes and it manifests in an emotional state often characterized by action tendencies to alleviate the emotional experience. In other words, a perceived inability to fully experience unpleasant, aversive or uncomfortable emotions is distress intolerance, which needs to escape from the uncomfortable emotions. These are often linked to a fear of experiencing negative emotion. The negative emotions that are varying types could potentially be distressing for people. The destructive effects of alcoholism on marital outcomes have been well documented [3] & [4]. Existing evidence demonstrates positive relationships between alcoholism and marital conflict [5], [6] as well as marital violence [7] which suggests negative marital interaction processes. The identification of the interaction processes associated with marital disruption in alcoholic couples may require intervention to prevent negative marital outcomes.

In the present study, a sample of wives of alcoholics and non-alcoholics has been examined to evaluate whether and how the marital satisfaction in the wives of alcoholics correlates with and differs from the wives of non-alcoholics.

OBJECTIVES:

They were i) to use appropriate scales to measure marital satisfaction, distress tolerance and relationship in the wives of alcoholics and non-alcoholics, ii) to find out the relation between marital satisfaction and distress tolerance and relationship in the wives of alcoholics and non-alcoholics and iii) to compare the groups of the wives of alcoholics and non-alcoholics in marital satisfaction, distress tolerance and relationship.

METHODS:

DESIGN:

Cross section survey design was used for the study to assess correlation and differences in the wives of alcoholics and non-alcoholics.

SAMPLE:

The sample of 100 married women (50 the wives of alcoholics and 50 the wives of non-alcoholics) was taken for this research from Chennai. Purposive sampling was used for this study. Based on the screened test, CAGE,[9] and cooperation of the sampling population, they were classified into two groups i.e. the wives of alcoholics and non-alcoholics. Their ages were in the range of 26 to 45 years. The wives of non alcoholics and alcoholics in the age between 25-35 years were 48% & 54% and the groups in the age between 36-45 years were 52% & 46%. The groups' education levels

less 10th were 60% & 56% & more 10th were 40% & 54% respectively. The former groups' religions such as Hindu, Muslim and Christian were 48%, 20% & 12% and the later group religions such as Hindu, Muslim and Christian were 54%, 22% & 44%.

INSTRUMENTS

Marital satisfaction, Distress tolerance and Relationship scales were used to the wives of alcoholics and non-alcoholics

a) ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale: The EMS scale [10] consisted of two subscales. The scale was a 15-item scale comprising the Idealistic Distortion (5 items) and Marital Satisfaction Scales (10 items). Each of the 10 Marital satisfaction items representing one of the areas of the marital relationship assessed by the full-length had an alpha coefficient of .92 and a 4-week test-retest reliability of .92 [11].

b) Distress Tolerance scale: Sixteen items were developed reflecting perceived ability to tolerate emotional distress, subjective appraisal of distress, attention being absorbed by negative emotions, and regulation efforts to alleviate distress. Items were rated on a 5-point scale - (5) strongly disagree, (4) mildly disagree (3) agree and disagree equally, (2) mildly agree, and (1) strongly agree. High scores

Table 2 shows the mean, SD and t-value of the groups in marital satisfaction and subscales.

Results presented in the table 2 indicate that there is significant difference in marital satisfaction (both total score and sub-scale) of the wives of non-alcoholics and alcoholics. The comparison of scores shows that the wives of non-alcoholics scored higher than the wives of alcoholics. This implies that the wives of non-alcoholics have more

The table 3 shows the mean, SD and t-value of the groups in distress tolerance.

The results (Table 3) show that there is no significant difference between the wives of non-alcoholics and non-alcoholics alcoholics in distress tolerance. The wives of non-alcoholics scored slightly higher score than the wives of alcoholics. This implies that the wives of non-alcoholics have equal level of distress tolerance in absorption, appraisal and regulation. The finding supports the earlier research of O'Farrell, & Birchley [14].

The table 4 shows the mean, SD and t-value of the groups in relationship scale

represented high distress tolerance. The test-retest reliability was .79 [12].

c) Relationship scale: A 7-item scale [13] designed to measure general relationship satisfaction. Respondents answered each item using a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (low satisfaction) to 5 (high satisfaction). Scoring was kept continuous. The higher the score, the more satisfied the respondent was with her relationship. The test-retest reliability was .84

RESULTS

Statistics such as percentage and t-test were calculated for analyzing the obtained data. Table 1 shows the correlation between marital satisfaction, and relationship and distress tolerance

Results presented in the table 1 indicate that there is highly significant correlation between marital satisfaction, and the two measures i.e., distress tolerance and relationship in the wives of non-alcoholics but there is a significant correlation between marital satisfaction, and relationship and no significant correlation between marital satisfaction and distress tolerance in the wives of alcoholics. This indicates that the wives of alcoholics have low distress tolerance compared to the wives of non-alcoholics.

marital satisfaction in understanding each other, pleasing personality characteristics and personal habits, handling role responsibilities, sympathizing with partner's mood, communication for happiness, perfect successful relationship, decisions and resolving conflicts, financial position and financial practice, less unfulfilled needs, leisure activities and spending time together, role responsibilities, and feeling good about values. But the groups do not have significant difference in idealistic distortion of marital satisfaction score.

The comparison of scores of the wives of non-alcoholics and alcoholics (Table 4) shows that there is significant difference between the wives of non-alcoholics and non-alcoholics alcoholics in relationship satisfaction. The wives of non-alcoholics scored higher than the wives of alcoholics which imply that the wives of non-alcoholics have more relationship satisfaction. The findings indicate that the wives of non-alcoholics have better relationship in fulfilling partner's needs, satisfying relationship, having good relationship compared to most, meeting original expectations, depth of love in partner, and no problems in relationship.

Table 1. Correlation between marital satisfaction, and relationship and distress tolerance

S.No	Groups	Scales			
		Marital satisfaction	Relationship satisfaction	Distress tolerance	
1	Wives of non-alcoholics		.972*		.833*
2	Wives of alcoholics		.622*		.103

Table 2. Mean, SD and t-value of the groups in marital satisfaction and subscales.

S.No	Groups	Scale	N	X	S.D	t-value
1	Wives of non- alcoholics	Marital satisfaction (total score)	50	33.92	4.07	
2	Wives of alcoholics		50	30.60	3.20	5.01*
1	Wives of non alcoholics	Idealistic distortion (subscale)	50	10.96	1.19	
2	Wives of alcoholics		50	10.86	1.26	1.50
1	Wives of non alcoholics	Marital satisfaction (subscale)	50	22.96	3.05	
2	Wives of alcoholics		50	19.42	4.10	4.89*

* P>0.01

Table 3. Mean, SD and t-value of the groups in distress tolerance

S.No	Groups	Scale	N	X	S.D	t-value
1	Wives of non alcoholics	Distress tolerance	50	32.30	4.18	
2	Wives of alcoholics		50	31.86	3.61	1.50

Table 4 Mean, SD and t-value of the groups in relationship scale

S.No	Groups	Scale	N	X	S.D	t-value
1	Wives of non alcoholics	Relationship	50	12.12	4.11	
2	Wives of alcoholics		50	9.86	3.82	4.05*

* P>0.01

DISCUSSION:

This research was undertaken to investigate the correlations between marital satisfaction, and distress tolerance and relationship in the wives of non-alcoholics and non-alcoholics. The wives of alcoholics had highly significant correlation between marital satisfaction, and relationship compared to the wives of non-alcoholics. But no significant correlation was found between marital satisfaction, and distress tolerance in the wives of alcoholics. Besides, the results indicate that the wives of alcoholics and non-alcoholics differed significantly in marital satisfaction and relationship. This indicates that both the wives of alcoholics had high marital satisfaction and relationship. Besides, the married life in wives of non-alcoholic spouses could go smoothly as they did their task easily.

But in the distress tolerance, the wives of alcoholics and non-alcoholics did not differ in the areas of tolerance in absorption, appraisal and regulation. The findings indicate that the wives of non-alcoholics have more marital satisfaction in understanding each other, pleasing personality characteristics and personal habits, handling role responsibilities, sympathizing with partner's mood, communication for happiness, perfect successful

relationship, etc. The group has good relationship in fulfilling partner's needs, satisfying relationship, having good relationship compared to most, etc. The earlier findings [15] [16], [17] & [18] support the present study.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the above discussion that there are significant correlations and differences between the marital satisfaction and relationship in the wives of alcoholics and non-alcoholics but not in distress tolerance. The findings of the study indicate that the wives of alcoholics less relationship, and marital satisfaction as compared to the wives of non-alcoholics. It concludes that on some aspects in the wives of alcoholics cannot contribute significantly for the wellbeing of their family. Their attention might be diverted because of drinking husbands. They cannot give proper attention to their marital lives.

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